

CULTIVATING FAITH

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Defend against vice and cultivate faith with the virtues of obedience, cooperation, prayerfulness, and charity.

Obey the way. Just as a neglected plant withers and dies, and a nurtured plant grows and bears fruit, so goes your faith. Church, communion, confession, and reading and following the Word of God—nourish your faith and lift your soul. When you put the Word into practice, your life changes and faith grows.

Cooperate with grace. The Way of Christ is impossible on your own. It is only made possible by the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. Yet grace, while it can not be earned, can be refused. Don't turn your back to grace out of sinfulness and pride. Christ cannot be fully fruitful in you unless you fully cooperate with Him.

Pray for increase. "Prayer is oxygen to the soul" (St. Padre Pio). Day after day, ask the Lord to further strengthen and infuse you with the virtue of faith.

Love with charity. Charity is led by action, not emotion. To love with charity is to will the good of the other for God's sake, not your own. God is the source of love (see 1 John 4:7). By sharing His love with you, you are made capable of sharing it with others, as well as rightfully returning it to Him. Let your faith be an expression of God's love.

Faith, nurtured by obedience, cooperating with grace, enlivened by prayer, and animated by charity, fills the soul and purifies the heart. Protect and be thankful for the precious jewel of faith.

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RELATED SCRIPTURE



“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” — *1 John 4:7 (NRSVCE)*

“Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to his word; instead, put it into practice.” — *James 1:22 (GNT)*

“So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.” — *Romans 10:17 (NRSVCE)*

“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” — *James 2:14-17 (NRSVCE)*

“But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder. Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.” — *James 2:18-26 (NRSVCE)*

“If we obey God’s commands, then we are sure that we know him. If we say that we know him, but do not obey his commands, we are liars and there is no truth in us. But if we obey his word, we are the ones whose love for God has really been made perfect. This is how we can be sure that we are in union with God: if we say that we remain in union with God, we should live just as Jesus Christ did.” — *1 John 2:3-6 (GNT)*



“Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. 16 It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.” — *Philippians 2:12-16 (NRSVCE)*

“Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.” — *1 Thessalonians 3:10-13 (NRSVCE)*

“Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.’” — *John 14:8-14 (NRSVCE)*

“‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.’ Judas (not Iscariot) said to him,



‘Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.’” — *John 14:15-26 (NRSVCE)*

RELATED QUOTES



“Prayer is oxygen to the soul” — *St. Padre Pio*

“Faith grows by the exercise of prayer.” — *C.H. Spurgeon*

“Prayer makes your heart bigger, until it is capable of containing the gift of God himself. Prayer begets faith, faith begets love.” — *St. Mother Teresa*

“Faith and prayer are the vitamins of the soul; man cannot live in health without them.” — *Mahalia Jackson*

“If we do not fill our mind with prayer, it will fill itself with anxieties, worries, temptations, resentments, and unwelcome memories.” — *Scott Hahn*

“Faith, and hope, and patience and all the strong, beautiful, vital forces of piety are withered and dead in a prayerless life. The life of the individual believer, his personal salvation, and personal Christian graces have their being, bloom, and fruitage in prayer.” — *E.M. Bounds*

“The following guidelines will help a believer build his faith: 1. Carefully read through the Word and meditate on it. Through reading the Word of God, and especially through meditation on it, the believer becomes acquainted with the nature and character of God. 2. We must maintain an upright heart and a good conscience and not knowingly and habitually indulge in the things which are contrary to the mind of God. 3. We should not shrink from opportunities where our faith may be tried. The more I am in a position to be tried in faith, the more I will have the opportunity of seeing God’s help and deliverance. 4. Let God work deliverance for us and do not work deliverance on our own.” — *George Muller*

“Three things are necessary for the salvation of man: to know what he ought to believe; to know what he ought to desire, and to know what he ought to do.” — *St. Thomas Aquinas*



“Since God had commanded it, it was necessary that I do it. Since God commanded it, even if I had a hundred fathers and mothers, even if I had been a King’s daughter, I would have gone nevertheless.” — *St. Joan of Arc*

“Just as love is a verb, so is faith.” — *Nannie Helen Burroughs*

“Let us have faith that right makes might; and in that faith let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.” — *Abraham Lincoln*

“Christ will never be found the Savior of those who know nothing of following His example. Saving faith and real converting grace will always produce some conformity to the image of Jesus.” — *J.C. Ryle (see Col. 3:10)*

“Faith in action is service. We try to be holy because we believe. In most modern rooms you see an electrical light that can be turned on with a switch. But, if there is no connection with the main powerhouse, then there can be no light. Faith and prayer is the connection with God, and when that is there, there is service.” — *St. Mother Teresa*

“The most beautiful act of faith is the one made in darkness, in sacrifice, and with extreme effort.” — *St. Padre Pio*



REFLECTION



Q. For you personally, what things do you consistently do (or should you consistently do) to nurture and cultivate your faith?

Q. In what ways can you better cooperate with God's grace in your life? In other words, what are things you should do more of, and what are things you should do less of?

Q. How often do you pray? How do you pray? Is there an opportunity to pray more in quantity and/or quality (from the heart)? In what ways can you improve your daily habit of prayer? What fruits do you believe will come of it?



Q. Remember, charity is led by action, not emotion. To love with charity is to will the good of the other for God's sake, not your own. Knowing this, in what ways can you better lead with charity and let your faith be an expression of God's love? (*note: love is a fruit of faith*)

Q. Did any of the related Scriptures or quotes stand out to you (*please elaborate*)?

Q. Any other thoughts you'd like to share?
